

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BRUSSE 12759 281703Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00
NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 ACDA-07
TRSE-00 SAJ-01 OMB-01 /067 W
-----281724Z 012022 /44

R 281514Z DEC 76
FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8697
INFO USMISSION NATO
SECDEF WASHDC
JCS WASHDC
USCINCEUR
AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY ATHENS
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRUSSELS 12759

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MPOL, NATO, AWACS, BE
SUBJECT: BELGIAN VIEWS ON AWACS

REF: (A) BRUSSELS 11396, (B) USNATO 6754

1. A WELL-INFORMED, SENIOR OFFICIAL OF THE FOREIGN MINISTRY
EXPLAINED BELGIAN VIEWS ON AWACS TO US AFTER THE NATO
MINISTERIAL MEETING IN TERMS NOT ENTIRELY CONSISTENT WITH
THE RECENT STATEMENTS OF DEFENSE MINISTER VANDEN BOEYNANTS.
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BRUSSE 12759 281703Z

2. ACCORDING TO THIS OFFICIAL:
(A) THE COSL OF AWACS REMAINS A REAL PROBLEM FOR THE
BELGIAN GOVERNMENT AND HAS SEVERAL ASPECTS. THERE
ARE ABSOLUTE LIMITS TO WHAT THE BELGIAN GOVERNMENT
CAN AND WILL SPEND ON ITS MILITARY UNDER PRESENT

CIRCUMSTANCES. THAT SPENDING LIMIT CANNOT ACCOMMODATE AWACS PRESENTLY AND IN THE NEAR FUTURE WITHOUT CUTS ELSEWHERE. ISSUE THUS BECOMES ONE OF MILITARY PRIORITIES. COMMENT: THIS POINT SEEMS TO BE TRUE. HOWEVER, VANDEN BOEYNANTS SAID EARLIER THAT THE FLEXIBLE FUNDING ARRANGMENT MIGHT MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR BELGIUM TO PARTICIPATE.

(B) IN DETERMINING ITS PRIORITIES, THE BELGIANS ARE (A) NOT FULLY CONVINCED OF THE ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL NATURE OF AWACS TO WESTERN AIR DEFENSE, AND (B) TEND TO PREFER TO SPEND AVAILABLE FUNDS DIRECTLY ON A WEAPONS SYSTEM RATHER ON WHAT THEY REGARD AS YET ANOTHER SURVEILLANCE AND CONTROL SYSTEM. COMMENT: POINT (A) CONTRADICTS DEFENSE MINISTER VANDEN BOEYNANTS WHO SAID HE WAS CONVINCED OF THE MILITARY IMPORTANCE OF THE AEW SYSTEM AND THAT HIS ONLY PROBLEM WAS FINANCIAL.

(C) THE BELGIAN GOVERNMENT LOOKS ON AWACS AS RUNNING COUNTER TO THE "TWO-WAY STREET" CONCEPT TO WHICH THEY ATTACH CONSIDERABLE AND GROWING IMPORTANCE. THEY CONSIDER AWACS IS ALMOST ENTIRELY A U.S. PROGRAM, DEVELOPED BY THE U.S. TO MEET A NEED IT IDENTIFIED, WITH WHICH THE SMALLER EUROPEAN NATO ALLIES WERE ASKED TO ASSOCIATE THEMSELVES IN THE LAST STAGES. COMMENT: THIS DOES NOT STRIKE US AS A VALID OBSERVATION. WE WILL TRY TO EDUCATE THIS OFFICIAL.

(D) THE BELGIAN GOVERNMENT SEES LITTLE OR NO ECONOMIC OFFSET FOR BELGIAN INDUSTRY IN AWACS AND BELIEVES THAT ANY PRODUCTION SHARE WHICH MIGHT ACCRUE TO IT WOULD BE IN "UNINTERESTING TECHNOLOGY." COMMENT: IF THERE ARE CO-PRODUCTION POSSIBILITIES, ESPECIALLY IF THEY INVOLVE HIGH TECHNOLOGY AND EMPLOYMENT, THE PROSPECTS FOR CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BRUSSE 12759 281703Z

BELGIAN PARTICIPATION IN THE AEW SYSTEM WOULD IMPROVE.

(E) FINALLY, THE BELGIAN GOVERNMENT HAS COME TO RESENT WHAT IT VIEWS AS USG "ARM-TWISTING" AT ALL LEVELS ON AWACS. COMMENT: WE DO NOT TAKE THIS REMARK TOO SERIOUSLY. IT IS A MANIFESTATION OF THE SMALL COUNTRY SYNDROME.

3. THE FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL SAID THAT THESE COMMENTS SHOULD NOT BE TAKEN TO MEAN THAT THE BELGIAN GOVERNMENT WILL IN THE LAST ANALYSIS REFUSE TO JOIN IN AWACS.

4. WE HAVE HEARD UNOFFICIALLY THAT IF THE AWACS PROJECT IS APPROVED, BELGIUM WILL RECEIVE A LARGE SUBCONTRACT FROM THE FRENCH FIRM SNECMA FOR THE AWACS BOEING 707 AIRCRAFT ENGINES. PLEASE ADVISE IF THIS IS SO. RENNER

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: AWACS, AIR DEFENSE, WARNING SYSTEMS, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION, REGIONAL DEFENSE ORGANIZATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 28 DEC 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976BRUSSE12759
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760474-0123
From: BRUSSELS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t1976128/aaaaagix.tel
Line Count: 112
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 BRUSSELS 11396
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <05 APR 2004 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <06 APR 2004 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: BELGIAN VIEWS ON AWACS
TAGS: MPOL, BE, NATO
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006